

## Tomato Guide



There are many things to consider when choosing and planting tomatoes. Get the best results from your tomato plants by following these guidelines!

### Site Selection & Preparation

Tomatoes like lots of sun. The most successful tomatoes are grown where they get at least 8 hours of sun each day. Plant where they get reasonably good drainage.

Dig up the ground thoroughly and mix in **Master Nursery Paydirt or Paydirt with Soil N' Rich**. A starter fertilizer like **Master Start** can be added at this time.

Remember that tomatoes like deep, infrequent watering, so set up a watering system that makes deep watering easy, like furrows or drip lines.

### Planting

Never plant into dry soil. Be sure to water the area to be planted beforehand, and make sure the plant itself is not water stressed.

Tomatoes root along the stem, allowing them to be planted deeply unlike other plants. They may be planted with just a few inches sticking out above ground, even if the plant is quite tall. Remember that this is for tomatoes only!

### Training

We recommend a training system that keeps fruit off the ground to prevent rot and insect damage. Wire tomato cages work



well, but keep in mind that many indeterminate tomatoes (see Variety Selection, next page) will often over grow these. Redwood stakes or staked masonry wire reinforcing sheets also work well.

### Fertilizing

For best results, use **Master Start** for planting followed by regular applications of **Master Nursery Tomato**

**Vegetable Food**

according to the package directions.

Remember that too much Nitrogen can cause excessive growth while inhibiting flower production.

Applying a product like **Master Bloom** with a high phosphorus content will help encourage early and heavy blooming, while **Neptune's Harvest Crab Shell** will supplement Calcium, preventing blossom drop.

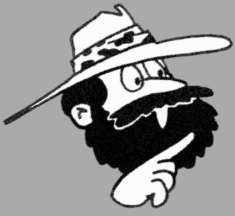
### Frost Protection

Early plantings must be prepared for frost. Waxed paper covers called hot caps are a traditional method of protection. Row cover is our preferred method. This clear micro perforated poly cover allows air in and doesn't force soft growth. It can also be left on longer. In addition to keeping the plant warm, it also deters insects as well.

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## Variety Selection

The best new varieties are disease and nematode resistant: you can recognize them by the initials following the name:

- **V-Verticillium Wilt resistant**
- **F-Fusarium Wilt resistant**
- **N-Nematode resistant**
- **T-Tobacco Mosaic Virus resistant**

Conventional varieties with good flavor and production include Better Boy VFN, Champion VFNT, and Super Fantastic VFN.

We carry one of the biggest selections of heirloom and specialty

tomatoes in the area. An heirloom is generally considered to be a variety that has been passed down, through several generations of a family because of its valued characteristics. There have been liberties taken with the use of this term for commercial purposes.

**Commercial Heirlooms:** Open-pollinated varieties introduced before 1940, or more than 50 years in circulation.

**Family Heirlooms:** Seeds passed down for several generations through a family.

**Created Heirlooms:** Crossing two known parents (either two heirlooms or an heirloom and a hybrid) and dehybridizing the resulting seeds to eliminate undesirable characteristics and stabilize the desired characteristics, perhaps as many as 8 years or more.

**Mystery Heirlooms:** Varieties that are a product of natural cross-pollination of other heirloom varieties.



(Note: All heirloom varieties are open-pollinated but not all open-pollinated varieties are heirloom varieties.)  
(Tomatofest.com)

Keep in mind that **Determinate** vines are typically shorter and require less staking but will ripen nearly all at the same time-perfect for canning. **Indeterminate** plants are larger, vining types that produce continuously over a longer period.

## Watering

Tomatoes have a deep root system and need deep watering. Sprinkling isn't enough. Deep water every 7-14 days depending on the texture and water holding capacity of the soil. Soils with plenty of organic material will hold water longer than sandy or gravelly soil.

Keep in mind that shallow, frequent watering can delay or prevent flower and fruit set and encourage disease.

## Insect Control

Main insect problems are Horn Worms that eat foliage, Stink Bugs that sting the fruit, and Aphid and White Fly that suck juice from the leaves.

Control worms with **Bt Caterpillar Killer**. **Neem Oil**, **Pest Fighter** or **Sevin** control most other insects. Monitor White Fly with traps as they are most difficult to control. Early

infestations are easier to control.

Apply pesticides according to directions, early morning or late evening.

